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## MY BABES IN THE WOOD,

WHICH was the title jocularly given in ours, to an interesting young family, reared this summer in a hole in the trunk of a venerable apple-tree, at the corner of the garden. Children, shall I tell you their history? 'beginning at the very beginning,' which you know you like?

It was towards the end of May, and our garden was becoming a perfect aviary. It is a very old-fashioned garden, stocked with ancient fruit-trees:

Apple and pear, and plum and cherry,  
Or anything else to make us merry,

as many a bird sang, or meant to sing: with luxuriant undergrowth of currants, gooseberries, raspberries, running almost wild. In this paradise are admitted neither guns, nor traps, nor bird-nesting boys; so we presume it is well known to all our feathered neighbours; and that they mention it to one another privately—under the rose, or the hawthorn-bush—as 'a most desirable place for house-building.'

We had concerts gratis all day over, mingled with chirpings and squabbings among the sparrows, the most quarrelsome birds alive; and a few inexplicable 'rows' of a general kind, after which a cuckoo would be seen flying, in her lazy, heavy way, from the scene of dispute, pursued by a great clamour of lesser birds. Mrs C., however, seemed indifferent to public opinion; would settle herself on a tree in the field, and indulge us with her soft, plaintive 'Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!' till she was tired.

Nest-building was at its height—namely, the tree-tops. The most important mansion was owned by a pair of anonymous birds—I believe of the thrush species, though they did not sing. They had gone about their domestic affairs so very quietly that the family were nearly fledged before the nest was discovered. Afterwards, for days, they gave me no little disquietude. I used to be disturbed at inconvenient seasons, from work or talk, by the misery of these big ungainly birds—they were nearly as large as pigeons—which kept flying frantically about the garden, and screeching discordantly, all because a curious but perfectly well-intentioned lad was peering into their nest. If my pet cat happened to lie in sleepest innocence on the parlour window-sill, these indignant parents would swoop fiercely past him, close enough to have pecked his eyes out, and sit screeching at him from the neighbouring tree. He never took any notice; but since feline nature is weak, from the day that the nest was vacated, and more than one newly fledged youngster was seen hopping awkwardly about

under the gooseberry-bushes, I was kept in mortal fear lest he should walk in at the window with a young thrush in his mouth. No such disaster happened; yet, I confess, that when the thrush family finally disappeared, it was a great relief to my mind.

My next friends were a pair of tom-tits, which took possession of a crack in the wall, underneath my bedroom-window. Their privacy was extreme. It was a mystery how they contrived to creep in and out of a hole, apparently not big enough to admit a large blue-bottle fly; and their little family must have been reared in very cramped lodgings. Nobody ever saw the young ones, for it would be impossible to get at them. Yet it was pleasant of a morning to watch the old birds flying to and fro, hanging a moment outside of the crack, and then popping in. They were very pretty birds—the papa especially—a most natty little fellow, delicately shaped, with a glossy blue-black head. After feeding-time was over, he used to go and sit on the nearest tree, in sight of his domestic establishment, brushing up his feathers, and singing 'tit, tit, tit,' the utmost he could do. When at last this worthy little couple vanished—children and all—I decidedly missed them from the crack in the wall.

But of all my garden families, the one most cared for was that I have to-day lost—my babes in the wood. Let me resume their history.

It was about the end of May, when in my daily walk before breakfast—which you will find is the very best hour for observing birds or anything else in nature—I found that, whenever I passed a particular corner, I always startled some large bird, which flew away in alarm. At last I saw it—beak, head, and all, emerging from a hole in a half-decayed apple-tree. It was a black-bird.

'So, my friend,' said I, 'you are evidently bent on settling—a very laudable proceeding—and you shall not be disturbed.'

Therefore, though I passed the tree twenty times a day, and each time out flew a bird, for many days I generously abstained from taking any notice of the busy little house-builders. At last, after watching one of them scramble out of the hole—the hen-bird probably, as she was large, clumsy, and brownish; it really is hard that the female of most birds should generally be so much less good-looking than the male—I ventured to look in. There, with some difficulty, I saw, a foot or more deep in the hollow tree, four bluish eggs.

Considering them now fairly settled in house-keeping, I took every opportunity that their shyness

allowed, of becoming acquainted with the new-comers. Soon I knew them well by sight, and they certainly had a fair chance of reciprocating the compliment. Gradually, they shewed less fear; and though that peculiar cry, half twitter, half screech, which seemed used as a signal of alarm between the parents, was still uttered, it was not in that shrill pitiful anguish which really makes one feel that

To rob a poor bird of its young, or even to make it apprehensive on the point, almost transforms one, in one's own conscience, to an ogre killing a baby.

The old birds were a goodly pair. Mr B., as I named him, was an uncommonly handsome little gentleman—jet-black, with the slenderest figure, the yellowest bill, the brightest eyes; quite a beau among black-birds. But with all his beauty, he was the most attentive of husbands, and the most cheerful and musical. He had great richness and variety of song, made distinct turns and trills; nay, I once heard him execute a distinct shake on two notes. He never tired of singing. Lying awake one night, I heard him begin with the dawn, loud as ever; and in showery weather, his exuberant carols lasted all day long.

But the treat of treats was to watch him perched on the topmost spray of a poplar, not yet fully in leaf, so that his delicate shape was clearly discernible against the sky; and listen to him in the still June evening, singing to his wife and family a song that almost brought the tears into one's eyes, to think there should be such a happy creature in the world.

Meantime, the world jogged on as it will; and all sorts of things were, week after week, happening to everybody in it, while, peaceful in his garden, which no doubt, he looked upon as his own personal property, currants, raspberry-bushes, and all—

That blithe and indefatigable bird,

Still his redundant song of love and joy preferred.

Mrs B. I rarely saw—not even when looking down into the nest, though she was probably there all the while, brooding dusky and motionless over the four eggs. You may have noticed that nothing alive is so absolutely motionless as a hen-bird sitting on her nest. You may go up to her, almost put your hand upon her, and not a feather will stir; hardly a twinkle of the bright observant eye will betray her consciousness of your presence, or the maternal agony which at the last minute, and not till then, drives her away by the mere instinct of self-preservation from her rifled home. I wonder how any boy, who ever had a home and a mother, can take a bird's-nest.

I thought the eggs a long time hatching; but that was Mrs B.'s affair, not mine. One fine morning, passing the apple-tree, I heard a chirp, weak and faint, but still the chirp of a living thing, and felt as pleased as—well, as most people are when silly, young, helpless things of any sort are newly introduced into the business of this world. But the parents flew about so wildly, and appeared in such a state of mind, that I had not the heart to frighten them further by looking into the nest. Next day, in their absence, I did so; and lo! four wide-open mouths—mouths and nothing else—stretched themselves up from the bottom of the hole, in true infantine fashion, clamorously demanding 'something to eat.'

'My young friends,' thought I, 'your papa and mamma are likely to have a busy life of it, if this is your behaviour on the second day of your existence.'

But the third, fourth, and all following days it was just the same. I never saw any young creatures—including kittens and babies—so incessantly and preternaturally hungry. As soon as my step was heard passing, arose from the heart of the apple-tree that eager 'chirp, chirp, chirp,' and there were those four gaping beaks, or sometimes three, one having apparently had its worm and retired content—ravenously appealing to me for breakfast. Very flattering—to be mistaken for an old black-bird!

In process of time, my 'young family,' as they were called, grew wiser and less clamorous; but still, they always chirped when I looked in at the nest, and their parents, seeing no ill follow, became more at ease, even familiar. Many a morning, as I sat reading under a tree, about three yards off, Mrs B. would come and sit on the bough within a few inches of her nursery, and hold a soft chirping conversation with her little ones, while her husband was practising his florid music on the topmost branch of the tree. They were a very happy family, I do think, and a pattern to many unfeathered families far and near.

One night in June we had a terrific storm. The thunder, close overhead, rolled through the heavy dawn like parks of artillery; the rain came dripping through the roof and soaking in at the window-sills. We afterwards heard, with no great surprise, of churches struck, wheat-stacks burned up, and trees in the next garden blasted by the lightning; but amidst all these disasters, I grieve to confess, one of my most prominent thoughts was: What will become of my young black-birds? For their hole being open to the sky, I expected the torrents of rain would have filled it like a tub, and drowned them, poor wee things! in their nest.

How this did not happen, I even now am puzzled to decide; whether the rain soaked safely through the wood, or the parents, turning their wings into umbrellas, sat patiently over the opening of the hole till the storm was passed. But next morning, when I paddled through the dripping garden to see if they were alive, there they were, all four, as perky and hungry as ever! And at noon, a stray sunbeam piercing into their shadowy nursery, gave me a distinct vision of the whole family, sound asleep, packed tightly together with their heads over one another's backs, not a feather ruffled—they had feathers now—among the whole brood. What cared they for thunder-storms?

They now throve apace. Once, coming suddenly round the corner, I saw on the edge of the hole the drollest little head, all beak and eyes, which looked about for a minute, and then popped down again. Doubtless, the eldest of the family, an adventurous and inquisitive young bird, desiring to investigate the world for himself—after which he and the rest were probably well scolded by the old black-birds, and advised caution; for sometimes the silence in the nest was such that I thought they had all flown, till I caught sight of the four little yellow bills and eight twinkling eyes.

Still, one now might daily expect their departure; and I own to an uncomfortable feeling at thought of

the empty nest, until an incident happened which reconciled me to the natural course of things.

One morning, at our railway station, I overheard two of my neighbours conversing.

'Yes,' said one, 'they are very great annoyances in gardens. I shot this morning a fellow which no doubt had his nest somewhere near—a remarkably fine black-bird.'

'Sir,' I was just on the point of saying, 'was it *my* black-bird?—have you dared to shoot *my* black-bird?' and a thrill of alarm, mixed with a sensation so fierce that I now smile to recall it, passed through me, and remained long after I became aware of the ludicrous impossibility of expressing it. If I could I have given 'a piece of my mind' to that stout middle-aged gentleman—who went on saying what a good shot he was, and how many birds he usually killed in his garden of a morning—he might not have gone into town to his office so composedly.

The wrong he did, however, was to some other 'young family,' not mine. I found them chirping away, neither fatherless nor motherless. Mrs B. was hopping, stout and matronly, among the apple-branches, and Mr B. caroling his heart out in his favourite cherry-tree—where, probably, he feasted as contentedly as our gunpowder friend would on lamb and green peas in the merchants' dining-rooms.

My happy family! That was my last sight of their innocent enjoyment. The same evening, two warning voices insinuated cruelly: 'Your black-birds are flown.'

I denied it. Not ten minutes before, I had heard their usual sleepy chirp, before they were quiet for the night, at the bottom of the hole. I wanted proof.

'We can give it. We poked'—

'You didn't surely poke them with a stick?'

'No!' cried the accused criminals. 'But we dropped a gooseberry down into their hole. We heard it fall, and not a chirp—not a stir. Now, not even your black-birds could have received such an unexpected visitor—a large, hard, green gooseberry—without giving some sign of surprise. Depend upon it, they are flown.'

They were not. Next morning, I both heard and saw them again, snug as ever, or so I believed. But a few hours after, taking advantage of the bright noon sunshine pouring direct on it, I looked deep down into the familiar hole. There was the nest, neat and round, and there, in the middle of it, reigning in desolate grandeur, was the large gooseberry!

'My young family is gone!' said I, rather sadly, when, having peered in every garden-nook, and found no sign of them, I came indoors.

'O yes, they left the nest an hour ago. The boy helped them out. They had got to the top of the hole, and couldn't get further; so he just put his hand in and gave them a lift, and out they flew.'

'All four of them?'

'All four—and as big as their parents.'

'And they have not been seen about the garden anywhere?'

'Nowhere. They just got out of the nest, and away they flew.'

So that is the end of my story.

I hope my 'young family' are enjoying themselves very much somewhere; that they find plenty of fruit, and worms, and sunshiny weather; above all, that they take care to keep out of the garden of my warlike neighbour taking his early morning rambles in company with a gun. But my garden, I confess, is a little duller than it used to be; and for some

weeks to come, I shall probably prefer other corners of it to that which contains the empty cradle of my Babes in the Wood.

#### ADVENTURES IN THE INDIAN REBELLION.

It is almost all the published experiences of our suffering countrymen during the eastern mutiny, we behold them a small band of aliens, sprinkled over an immense tract of subjugated country, about whose inhabitants they had little knowledge, and scarcely any care; content, so long as the profession of native obedience was made in bowing of heads and raising of arms, to believe all was well, and only not scouting the warnings of the more prudent, inasmuch as they seemed visionary rather than timid. The life of Europeans in India was, to say truth, for the most part frivolous and thoughtless enough, and as the calamity which befell them was one of the most tremendous in the history of revolts, so perhaps the victims themselves were the least fitted, by previous experience, to bear it. It is almost unnecessary here to say that they nevertheless did bear it—both men and women—with a fortitude which would have become a sect of Stoics. A very few men, however, chiefly civilians, had long looked forward to the time when some such outbreak as the present must needs occur, from causes of much older standing, and of much more real importance, than heterodox cartridges or missionary colonels, but which at the same time it would have been inconvenient and expensive to rectify. One of these sagacious persons was Mr Edwards, judge of Benares, and late magistrate and collector of Budaon in Rohilkund, whose *Personal Adventures during the Indian Rebellion*\* we have now before us. Of this gentleman Sir Charles Napier writes in his *Indian Misgovernment*: 'As far as a not more than ordinary acquaintance gives means of judging, he is a man with most able and extended views of policy; and there is no one who more stanchly protects the natives against injustice and insult.'

The sepoys forming the Bareilly garrison had just mutinied, massacred the Europeans, fired the station, broken open the central jail, which contained nearly four thousand of the most desperate characters in India, and were in full march upon Budaon, to join the treasury-guard there, and to burn and plunder the town. Several indigo-planters and others had at once fled to Mr Edwards for protection, who himself was utterly defenceless, and had nothing to congratulate himself upon except the comfortable thought that his wife and child were safe in the hills.

'I was satisfied,' says he, 'that as long as I was alone I could provide for my own safety, having numbers of friends in the district able and anxious to protect and shelter me; but they were unwilling in any way to compromise their own safety by granting an asylum to the others; more especially as some of the party were at feud with the people of the district, in consequence of having purchased estates, sold under harsh circumstances, by decrees of our civil courts.'

'To the large number of these sales during the past twelve or fifteen years, and the operation of our revenue system, which has had the result of destroying the gentry of the country and breaking up the village communities, I attribute solely the disorganisation of this and the neighbouring districts in these provinces.'

'By fraud or chicanery, a vast number of the estates of families of rank and influence have been alienated, either wholly or in part, and have been purchased by new men—chiefly traders or government

\* Smith, Elder, & Co., Cornhill.

officials—without character or influence over their tenantry. These men, in a vast majority of instances, were also absentees, fearing or disliking to reside on their purchases, where they were looked upon as interlopers and unwelcome intruders. The ancient proprietary of these alienated estates were again living as tenantry on the lands once theirs; by no means reconciled to their change of position, but maintaining their hereditary hold as strong as ever over the sympathies and affections of the agricultural body, who were ready and willing to join their feudal superiors in any attempt to recover their lost position and regain possession of their estates. The ancient landed proprietary body of the Budaon district were thus still in existence, but in the position of tenants, not proprietors. None of the men who had succeeded them as landowners were possessed of sufficient influence or power to give me any aid in maintaining the public tranquillity. On the contrary, the very first people who came in to me, imploring aid, were this new proprietary body, to whom I had a right to look for vigorous and efficient efforts in the maintenance of order. On the other hand, those who really could control the vast masses of the rural population were interested in bringing about a state of disturbance and general anarchy.

Mr Edwards determined to put in his lot with the rest of his fellow-countrymen, and with three or four companions and a faithful Afghan servant, Wuzer Singh, fled across the Ganges towards Futteghur. After receiving much doubtful hospitality, checkered with one piece of real kindness from an old pensioner of the government, who refused any recompense for his hospitality in these terms: 'You are in far greater need than I am now, who have a home, whereas you are wanderers in the jungles; but if ever your raj is restored, remember me and the little service I have been able to render you;' after many insults, only not breaking out into actual violence, the fugitives are attacked in earnest; their guide and guard, Mooltan Khan, assures them coolly that he pities them from his heart, but that the people in a certain village wherein they have rested have determined to murder them; the little party mounted at once, and Mr Edwards leads the way on an excellent horse which he has the good-fortune to have under him.

'I was some way in front, and riding along by the wall of the enclosure in which the house was situated, and not far from the gate, when the mob opened fire upon us, with savage shouts and yells. How I escaped I know not, for the bullets were rapping into the wall all about me; but my horse, becoming very restive under the fire, plunged so much that they could neither hit him nor myself. Turning round to see what was going on behind me, I saw Mr Donald senior, without his hat, trying to get out of the crowd, and a number of men rushing in upon Mr Gibson and striking at him with swords and sticks.

'I now noticed Mooltan Khan and our escort galloping off, leaving us to our fate. My only chance was to attempt to rejoin them; so I called out to Mr Donald senior, to follow me, and drawing my revolver, put my horse right at the crowd as hard as I could go. They opened for me right and left, and I passed close to poor Mr Gibson: I shall never forget his look of agony, as he was ineffectually trying to defend himself from the ruffians who were swarming round him. I could render him no aid, and was only enabled to save myself through the activity and strength of my horse. Once or twice, I was on the point of shooting some of the fellows, but refrained; thinking that threatening them with my pistol was more likely to deter them, as when once a barrel was discharged, they might close in upon me, fancying that I could no longer hurt them.'

Mr Edwards and two others arrive safe—if that

word can be used of any man under such circumstances—at Dhurumapore, Hurdeo Buksh's fort, where they find a large body of fugitives from Futteghur. All the party, however, with the exception of Mr and Mrs Probyn, their four little children, and Mr Edwards himself, return to that town, relying upon the fidelity of the 10th native infantry, and are all massacred (save two), either in their passage down the river to Cawnpore, or afterwards at that dreadful place. The mutineers insist that Hurdeo Buksh shall give up his unhappy guests to their tender mercies; but the old Rajpoot chief gives his right hand to Mr Edwards, and pledges his honour for their safety—only at the same time requesting them to leave the fort for a village three miles off, where some connections of his own would receive them.

'We accordingly gathered together our bedding and a few things for the four children, and started: Mrs Probyn carrying one child, I the baby, Wuzer Singh a third as well as my gun, and Probyn's servant the fourth child. Probyn himself carried his three guns and ammunition. How thankful did I feel at that moment that my wife and child were, as I hoped, safe in the hills, and that I had to face alone these alarms and perils.'

Even this miserable refuge is presently denied them; and they are directed to flee into the jungle to a village that would presently become insulated by the rising of two rivers, and to leave the poor children behind them. This last demand they positively refuse to comply with, and at length the whole party are permitted to depart together; the journey, however, was a terrible one, and when they arrived at its termination, Runjipoorah (the place of affliction), the scene was indeed calculated to inspire despair.

'As we came up, no one was moving in the village, all being yet asleep. One of the thakoors roused up the chief man, a wild-looking Aheer, who pointed out to us a wretched hovel, which he said was for the Probyns. It was full of cattle, and very filthy; the mud and dirt were over our ankles, and the effluvia stifling.

'My heart sank within me, as I looked round on this desolate, hopeless scene. I laid down the poor baby on a charpoy in a little hut, the door of which was open, and on which a child of one of the herdsmen was fast asleep. Poor Mrs Probyn, for the first time since our troubles commenced, fairly broke down, and wept at the miserable prospect for her children and herself. Probyn was much roused, and remonstrated with the thakoors, saying: "If there is no better place for us than this, you had better kill us at once, for the children cannot live here more than a few hours—they must perish." In the meantime I had looked round, to see if any arrangement could possibly be made for sheltering them, and, observing a little place on the roof of one of the huts, pointed it out to Wuzer Singh; he immediately scrambled up, and having examined it, called out that it was empty, clean, and dry, and a palace compared with the place below. I mounted up with his assistance, and was overjoyed to find a little room, clean and sweet, and with apparently a water-tight roof.'

Here these eight persons (Wuzer Singh being still with them) established themselves, and remained for a long period surrounded by the saving waters. From this place, Mr Edwards is enabled to send two letters, each enclosed in a small quill, so as to be held in the mouth of the messenger, to his wife at Nynce Tal, and to a friendly native at Bareilly.

'I had but a small scrap of paper—half the fly-leaf of Brydges on the 119th Psalm, which happily we had with us—on which to write both notes. Pen or ink I had none, and only the stump of a lead-pencil, of which the lead was so nearly exhausted that only a



little atom remained quite loose. I at once commenced my writing; in the middle, the little atom of lead fell out, and I was in despair. At last, after much searching in the dust of the mud-floor, I found it, and contrived to refix it in its place sufficiently to enable me to finish two very brief notes, about one inch square; which was all the man could conceal about his person, or would consent to take, as it was reported that the rebels were in the habit of searching all travellers for letters or papers, and had already killed several who were discovered with English letters on them.

'When the notes were ready, I got a little milk, and steeped them in it, to make the writing indelible, and then put them out to dry in the sun on a wall just outside my room. In an instant a crow pounced on one and carried it off—it was that for my wife.' I, of course, thought it was gone for ever, and felt heart-broken with vexation; as I had no more paper, nor any means or hope of getting any, on which to write another note. Wuzzer Singh had, unknown to me, seen the crow, followed it with one of the herdsmen, and after a long chase of about an hour, saw the bird drop it, and recovering it, brought it back to me uninjured.'

The poor little baby was of course the first to sink under the terrible privations to which the party now became subject; to save it was impossible; 'our fear was if he died in Runjpoorah, it would be impossible to get a dry spot in which to bury him—all the country being flooded to a considerable depth, except the sites of the houses.' A little after this, another of the children perished.

On Sunday, August 24, there arrives an unexpected visitor. 'I was roused this morning before dinner by a noise in the enclosure, and on looking up saw a tall spectral-looking figure standing before me, naked except a piece of cloth wrapped round his waist, much emaciated, and dripping with water. I recognised him as young Mr Jones, who, Hurdeo Buksh had informed us, had been saved from the boat captured by the sepoy.'

He has a story to tell enough to curdle the blood of any listener, but we have no room to repeat it here. On the ensuing day the messenger from Nynee Tal comes back with a welcome answer; he had concealed Mr Edwards's letter to his wife 'in the interior of a bamboo walking-stick, and knowing that this would be most likely seized and examined, he cracked it across half-way up, so that if taken from him and broken, it might give way at that exact part, and the portion in which the letter was concealed remain sound and escape detection.' All this occurred exactly as had been anticipated, and the little note reached its destination. The messenger related that the lady was dressed in black when she received it, but immediately afterwards went away and put on a white dress.

On Sunday, August 30, after passing some three months in hiding, the fugitives, now consisting of six Europeans, determined to embark for Cawnpore—by this time recaptured by the British—in a boat provided for them by Hurdeo Buksh. During the first twenty miles of their course down the Ramgunga, they ran little risk, as the chief's influence sufficed so far to protect them; but for thirty miles beyond, and after the junction of that river with the Ganges, their danger was great indeed: they pass by the scene of the massacre of the Futteghur fugitives, still inhabited by the murderers, with beating hearts; they reach a ferry where the stream narrows very dangerously. 'Except the boat at this and other ferries, there was nothing floating on the Ganges. Instead of the fleets which for the last fifty years had been passing up and down without intermission, not a single boat had been seen on its waters since that

one which had escaped from Futteghur, and of whose fate we were in the utmost ignorance. The unusual sight of a boat rowed rapidly down-stream, with a number of armed men on the roof and deck, attracted immediate attention, and we hardly dared to hope that we could safely pass this ferry. As we approached the place, our guards got their cartridge-boxes handy, and their powder-horns by them, all ready if required.

'We were, as we expected, challenged and asked who we were, and told to stop and pull inshore. The thakoor replied that he was taking his family down to Tirrowah Pulleah, and could not stop. A voice called out: "You have Feringhees (English) concealed in that boat; come ashore at once." "Feringhees on board," was the ready answer of the thakoor, Pirthee Pal; "I wish we had, and we should soon dispose of them, and get their plunder." "Stop, and come ashore," was repeated; but by this time, owing to the rapidity of the stream, we had floated past.'

Upon Dhunna Singh, a friend of Hurdeo Buksh, the fugitives depended for their safety during the latter part of this perilous voyage. In a desolate spot opposite this man's territory they wait for hours in a most terrible state of anxiety and suspense, but at last he comes in person and joins their company; his guards give out, in answer to all challenges, that the passengers within are his own family being taken down to a famous bathing-ghat close to Cawnpore. The enemy upon the bank, however, are often unsatisfied with this, and insist upon having a reply from the chief himself, whose peculiarly harsh and powerful voice never fails to convince them of his identity. 'On we went without interruption for some miles, when the stream carrying us close inshore on the right bank, we came, on rounding a point suddenly, on a considerable body of people, some bathing, and some sitting on the bank. On Dhunna Singh replying in the usual manner to their challenge, what was our delight and surprise to hear the party, who were completely deceived about us, earnestly warn Dhunna Singh not to proceed much further down the river, as he would in that case inevitably fall into the hands of the Gora log (Europeans), who were in force in Bithoor, and would kill all in the boat. Dhunna Singh, with his usual presence of mind, affected great alarm at this intelligence, and winking coolly at me as I lay inside the covering, eagerly inquired of those ashore where our troops were posted, and how far we could proceed down the stream with safety. He was told the exact spot; and then, saying he would avoid that point, and cross to the Oude side of the stream, told the rowers to give way. We shot rapidly away, and thus escaped a most imminent danger. So near were we to the party on shore that Probyn and I each caught up one of the children and kept our hands on their mouths, lest they might speak or cry out, which would have betrayed us at once, and we must have been lost.'

In passing Bithoor, they had another narrow escape; but at length Cawnpore itself is seen in the distance. 'Soon after, we came upon a picket of Sikhs posted near the old magazine. This was the most joyful sight our eyes had seen for many a weary day and night. The party, not imagining that by any possibility the boat could contain friends, came down to oppose us, and were capping their muskets to fire, when Wuzzer Singh hailed them in their own dialect, informing them who we were. The native officer in command, and all the men, then came forward to congratulate us on our escape; at which they seemed as heartily rejoiced as if they had been our own countrymen. They told us to drop down the stream until we came to the camp where our troops were entrenched, which we should know by a steamer being moored below. We left them, and in about half an

hour reached the landing. After some trouble, owing to the violence of the wind and strength of the current, we succeeded in making our boat fast to another alongside the steamer. Then, indeed, with grateful and overflowing hearts, we stepped on shore, feeling that at last we were saved and among our own countrymen.

Surely never was a more exciting voyage than this, or one with a more delightful termination. We have no doubt that this part of the book will be the most eagerly devoured by the public; but the whole volume, from beginning to end, is interesting in a very high degree.

## THE MOUNTEBANK.

### III. THE TRAVELLERS' REST.

THE door of the Travellers' Rest always stands hospitably open, as is becoming in a roadside house of entertainment. On this particular stormy night, the snow came drifting in furiously; and the wind, whistling along the wide passages of the old-fashioned public-house, disturbed the whist-players, who were enjoying their usual evening rubber in the little bar-parlour. Mrs Dawson, from her *sanctum* (the bar), where she sat in attendance on her customers, observed this, and called out to the servant:

'Bet, my lass, thou mayst shut the front-door; we shall ha' no more visitors to-night for certain; nobody would venture out in such a storm; so get thy supper, and to bed wi' thee—thou hast to rise early to-morrow. If the morning turns out fine, we shall ha' lots o' fair-day folk here by seven o'clock.'

Betty went to obey her mistress's orders, but immediately rushed back, screaming with terror, and crying out: 'A ghost, a ghost!' she took refuge in the kitchen, slamming the door after her, to keep the spiritual intruder at a respectful distance.

'A ghost! why, what does the silly wench mean?' said Mrs Dawson, as she put her knitting down, and came out of the bar to ascertain the cause of this extraordinary conduct. On arriving in the passage, she might have echoed Betty's cry—that is, if she, too, had been given to a belief in ghosts—for there, leaning for support with one hand on each doorpost, stood a figure ghastly to behold!—a man, gasping and struggling for breath; his eyes bloodshot, and glaring wildly around; his hair matted and dishevelled; shoeless; and, in such a bitter night as that, wearing only the thin garments of a street-tumbler, and those saturated with snow. At last, the mountebank had reached the Travellers' Rest, whose friendly lamp had guided him to the door.

'Bless me!' cried the landlady, 'here's a poor chap that looks as if he was dying. He's one of the show-folk, I see. Come in, good man; don't stand there—come to the fire; thou seems perished.'

The mountebank essayed to accept her hospitable invitation; he staggered forward a few steps; uttered, in a hoarse whisper, the word 'water,' when a stream of blood gushed from his mouth, and he fell heavily, face downwards.

The house was all astir directly; the rubber came to a sudden close, and the village doctor, who was one of the card-players, hurried out to the sick man's assistance. With the help of the other members of the whist-party, he raised the patient up, and bore him carefully into the bar-parlour, where he

was deposited on the sofa. Joe Ostler, and Betty too, now that her fears of 'the ghost' were dispelled, hastened to offer their services in his behalf.

'Blankets made quite hot, Betty! Warm water and a sponge, Joe! A glass of weak port-negus, Mrs Dawson!'

Such were the doctor's hurried orders; in compliance with which, the persons addressed disappeared instantaneously, and returned anon with the appliances above named. Every one present lending a hand, the hot blankets were quickly spread, and the insensible form of the mountebank enveloped therein; his mouth and eyes were sponged unceasingly for many minutes, but no signs of returning consciousness appeared.

'I'm afraid the poor fellow's gone,' said the sympathising Mrs Dawson.

'No, no,' replied the doctor, 'but he's in imminent danger; he has burst a blood-vessel, from over-exertion, apparently. We'll try the effect of the negus;' so saying, he slowly poured a small portion of it down the patient's throat. With much difficulty, the latter contrived to swallow it. It somewhat revived him, for presently he opened his eyes, and gazed inquiringly at the anxious faces assembled round his couch; the doctor took this opportunity to administer a second dose; and having laid the stranger in as easy a posture as he could, began to make his arrangements for the night. Taking the patient's dangerous condition into consideration, he resolved to sit up with him all night. Mrs Dawson and Joe Ostler volunteered to watch too; and it was agreed upon that, at six in the morning, they should be relieved by the other members of the party. Fain would the good-natured trio of card-players have remained all night; but this the doctor would by no means allow; so, with many kind wishes for the invalid's speedy recovery, they took their departure. Betty retired to rest; and Mrs Dawson brought the doctor a stiff tumbler of his favourite beverage (brandy and water, hot); also a glass of strong rum-punch for Joe, 'to help him to watch.' It didn't produce the desired effect though; for Joe, tired out with a hard day's work—he was ostler, boots, gardener, and waiter, too, sometimes—after tossing off the steaming potion, leaned back in his chair, and fell fast asleep. Mrs Dawson employed herself in knitting a stocking, and sipping green tea; the doctor, with his feet on the fender, was soon deeply immersed in newspaper politics; and the mountebank slumbered uneasily. This was the state of affairs in the little bar-parlour until three o'clock, when suddenly the patient started up, seized a chair which stood near him, waved it over his head, and finally balanced it on his forehead by one leg, exclaiming in a hoarse voice: 'Bravo, bravo, Alf! A capital *pose* that! Ha, ha, ha! We shall soon eclipse Risley and Sons! Bravo! Now, little Midgkins, it's *your* turn! Now for a somersault! Here goes!'

Suiting the action to the word, he was about to precipitate the chair across the room, and through a large looking-glass which hung over the mantel-piece; when the doctor, being on the alert, woke Joe with a hearty kick on the shins, and, by their united efforts, they wrested the chair from him, and forced him to lie down.

'Joe,' said the doctor, 'run across the road; ring the surgery-bell as loud as you can till my young man answers it, and tell him to send me a composing-draught.'

Joe hastened away on his mission, while the doctor and Mrs Dawson held the patient down, and tried with soothing words to calm his agitation, but in

vain. He trembled violently, his eyes flashed fire, and he raved unceasingly about his boys—his darlings! about hunger—poverty—snow—the workhouse—death!

Joe reappeared with the draught; this the doctor put into a tumbler, and applied to the patient's burning lips, with, 'Come, drink, my man, drink! a glass will drown care.'

The mountebank shook his head; but, on hearing the landlady in a kindly tone add her entreaties to those of the doctor, he said quietly: 'Well, well, Agnes, if you wish me to take it, I will;' and he held out his hand for the glass, the contents of which he drained at once. Its effects were instantaneous: the poor man laid his head on the pillow, and soon slept tranquilly.

At the appointed hour, the gentlemen who had promised to relieve the watchers assembled at the Travellers' Rest. Mrs Dawson, however, declared that she 'didn't feel fatigued—that it wasn't worth while to go to bed, for the fair-day folk would be meeting in an hour or two, and that she would rather stay up.' So said the doctor too, and Joe agreed with them.

'Bring breakfast, then, for the party, at my expense,' cried Hopkins, the exciseman; 'and let it be of the best.'

The landlady bustled about, aroused Betty to assist her, and between them they quickly prepared a capital breakfast, to which all present did ample justice. As the meal drew towards a conclusion, the mountebank slowly arose, and assuming a sitting-posture, surveyed the room and its occupants with unfeigned astonishment.

'Well, my man,' said the worthy doctor, 'you've had a tolerably long nap; now, take this cup of coffee, and, if you can, eat a slice of bread and ham; it will do you no harm.'

The poor man made no answer, for he was completely bewildered, but, mechanically, he took the cup in his hand, staring vacantly around until he chanced to see the portly form of the landlady, who was presiding at the breakfast-table, when, with the speed and force of lightning, yesterday's incidents rushed in a crowd upon his memory. 'This is the Travellers' Rest, then,' said he. 'Don't you remember me, Mrs Dawson? You used to call me Belphegor, because, like him, I was a mountebank, and, like him, had a pretty wife and a family.'

'So it is, I declare,' replied Mrs Dawson; 'it's the father of them two lovely boys as were here last fair.'

At the mention of his boys, the sick man's face became absolutely livid with fear, and his lips quivered as he gasped forth: 'My children—are they safe?'

There was a dead silence, for the dreadful truth flashed upon every one present. The father had been compelled to leave his darlings on the moor, exposed to the fury of that terrible tempest, while he sought aid in their behalf. The doctor was the first to speak; 'We'll hope so, my good friend.'

'Hope? Are they not here? Speak!—quick! quick! quick! You won't answer me. O my boys! Dead!—dead! Wretch, inhuman wretch that I was, to abandon them!'

Again the benevolent doctor was the spokesman; he hastened to assure the unhappy father that immediate search should be made—tried to cheer him by expressing a hope—which he certainly did not feel—that the children would be found safe, and promised that everything possible should be done for them.

'It's my delight, of a shiny night, in the season of the year!' roared rather than sang a rough, good-natured voice, as its owner drove up to the inn-door in a light cart.

'There's Tom Whitlock!' exclaimed the mountebank, and, exerting all his strength, he gathered his

blanket round him, rushed out of the room, and opened the street-door.

'Whoy, Jem, lad, be that thee?' cried the Yorkshireman; 'I be reet glad to see thee, mun! But what's up? Thee looks mortal pale and thin; hast been badly?'

'Your cart—it's empty, isn't it?' was the hurried reply.

'Ay, for sure,' said Tom. 'I unloaded t' goods down t' fair ground, and now I'm for putting Topsy into t' stable here.'

The party, having followed the patient to the door, now rapidly explained matters to Tom, who, with the characteristic kindness of his countrymen, immediately placed his vehicle at his friend's disposal, resumed the reins, and would at once have set forth in search of the little ones, but that the doctor insisted on the mountebank's having some refreshment before he started. Eat he could not; so he and Tom were each supplied with a dram to keep out the cold; the exciseman lent his large blue cloak to father; the schoolmaster supplied him with a thick woollen comforter; Joe Ostler produced his Sunday boots and stockings, and a warm sleeved-waistcoat; and Mrs Dawson contributed a pair of trousers and a hat that had belonged to her late husband. The doctor having declared that unless his patient consented to put these things on, he should be detained by main force, the mountebank reluctantly consented to allow Joe to equip him in them, although his impatience during the operation amounted to agony. In a few minutes his hasty toilet was completed; Joe assisted him into the cart; the doctor, furnished with wine and other restoratives, took his seat; and the ostler threw in a bundle of horse-cloths and a spade.

'Now, Topsy, old lass, as quick as thee canst!' shouted Tom; but the depth of snow rendered speed impossible. All the inmates of the Travellers' Rest, except its mistress, followed; not a word was spoken; suspense is generally silent. The travellers had proceeded nearly four miles without finding any traces of those whom they sought, when suddenly the mountebank, who had hitherto been perfectly motionless—if we except a quick, nervous twitching about the corners of his mouth—hastily clutched the doctor's arm, whispering: 'See! see!—there!' The doctor looked in the direction indicated by his patient, but shook his head. The dim gray of the morning presented nothing to his gaze but one unbroken surface of snow; his vision was not sharpened by parental love and fear. The father now attracted Tom's attention to the same spot, and bade him drive that way. 'See! see!' said he—'their grave!'

'A snaw-drift, loikely,' replied Tom. 'Keep up thy heart, mun; we'll soon see what it is. Get along, Topsy! Gee! gee! lass!'

As they neared the place, every one perceived, indeed, a mound of snow, presenting exactly the appearance of a grave; and to complete the resemblance, there stood a headstone.

'On! on!' said the father. 'O Tom, drive on! How slowly we get along!'

At last they stopped; the mountebank pushed aside the hands extended to assist him, leaped wildly out of the cart, and stood for a moment silently contemplating their grave. Joe took the spade, and began removing the tall white heap that looked so like a headstone. In a little while, having shovelled away a quantity of snow, the top of a large drum became visible: at sight of this, the mountebank's face was alternately flushed and pale, pale and flushed. Keen anxiety marked the countenances of the whole party, and all eyes were so intently fixed on Joe's operations, that none had observed a recent addition to their number. It was a woman—young, fair, and of an interesting appearance. Presentiment, destiny's grim



shadow, had whispered to her the sad tale of her children's luckless fate; and leaving the two younger ones to the care of a neighbour, she had set out for Eglinthorpe, resolved to know the worst. Softly she went up to the mountebank, gazed mournfully upon his altered countenance—for illness and anxiety had done their work—and pressing his hand affectionately, she said: 'Husband!' The effect of that one word was truly magical. The unhappy man, whose eyes were burning with fever, and whose pent-up grief was driving him to the very verge of insanity, was now relieved by a copious flood of tears. 'Gently, gently,' cried he, as Joe began to dig away the snowy mound which, it was now certain, covered his children—'gently! Don't disfigure my pretty darlings.'

Joe threw the spade down, tenderly drew away with his hands the remainder of the snow, and revealed to the expectant parents the lifeless forms of their dear offspring. There they lay, as in a tranquil sleep. Alf's right arm encircled his little brother's neck; his left hand grasped firmly the collar of the old coat in which they were enveloped, and it was evident that to the last the loving boy had striven to pull the garment tightly round Midgkins to shield him from the cold.

'Dead, dead!' cried poor father, with a groan of anguish: 'I knew it.'

Mother fell on her knees beside her little ones, and covering her face with her hands, wept bitterly. The doctor lost not a moment in parleying, but stooping down, began chafing Alf's frozen limbs. 'Joe!' said he abruptly, 'the wine! look sharp! There's hope yet.'

What sweet music was in that simple sentence! music that stayed the torrent of mother's tears, and caused father's countenance to beam with hope. Half-a-dozen pair of willing hands were soon employed in using every means suggested by the doctor for the resuscitation of the young sufferers. Happily, their earnest endeavours were crowned with success; for anon, Alf half-opened his eyes, and on seeing his father bending anxiously over him, he said—somewhat indistinctly as one speaks in a dream: 'Father, have you come to fetch us?'

'Yes, my love—yes,' replied father.

'But where's Midgkins?' murmured Alf. 'I thought I had my arms round him'—

'Your brother's quite safe,' interrupted the doctor; 'but, no more talking now; wait till you're stronger.'

'Look! he's breathing freely, and moves his hands,' said mother, referring to Midgkins—to whom she and Yorkshire Tom had been directing their care and attention. The doctor now gave orders that the boys should be wrapped up in the horse-cloths, and desiring their parents to get into the vehicle, he placed the little ones in their arms, and whispered to Tom to drive on, as fast as he could, for that much remained to be done before he could pronounce the young invalids out of danger. Moreover, he dreaded the effects of the keen morning air on the frame of the mountebank, shaken as it had been by the excitement of recent events. Arrived at the Travellers' Rest, every means that kindness and experience prompted was put into requisition for the behoof of the distressed family—warm baths, good beds; in short, all that her house afforded, Mrs Dawson freely placed at the doctor's disposal for their advantage, and was rewarded by his declaring, on the following day, that all that his patients now required was plenty of 'kitchen physic,' seconded by good nursing.

These two important adjuncts to the physician's skill were not wanting on the present occasion, for the kind landlady was indefatigable in her superintendence of broths and jellies for the invalids; and as for nursing, why, mother was there. The consequence was, that in a few days the doctor discontinued his visits.

'There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.' So said Shakespeare. With the subjects of our tale this 'tide' had now set in, and that which all their professional talent had failed to achieve, accident gained for them—notoriety, the very life of public professors in whatsoever department they may be. The newspapers that week published accounts of the 'hair-breadth 'escape' of the children; men who make a scanty livelihood by bawling through the streets recitals of the various casualties that are daily befalling their fellow-creatures, were heard in every town retailing the substance of the foregoing narrative, with sundry additions, alterations, and moral observations. The mountebank, as Byron phrases it, 'awoke one morning and found himself famous.' He received a letter from the manager of one of the London minor theatres, with an offer to Mr and the Masters Lethbridge of £5 per week, for their joint salary, to perform in a new drama, founded on fact, and entitled *The Snowstorm*; the engagement to terminate when the run of the drama was over. Said 'run' might continue only three weeks, or—if the piece turned out a great hit—might last as many months, just according to the success of the production. Then came, post-haste, a modeller in wax-work, who, with father's consent, took plaster-casts of his and his children's heads. Their well-worn professional attire was eagerly purchased by this gentleman, who went away delighted at having it in his power to add to the attractions of his wax-work exhibition 'the life-like models of the renowned Professor Lethbridge and his Infant Progeny, dressed in the identical apparel worn by them in the late disastrous snow-storm.' Nor was the mountebank less pleased with the five-pound note which was the result of the modeller's visit. He had scarcely left the inn, when a very showy carriage, driven by a very showy coachman, stopped at the door, and a stout elderly gentleman alighted. His dress was ultra-fashionable, and he was be-jewelled, be-whiskered, and be-ringed *à merveille*. He inquired politely for Monsieur Latébrege, to whom he introduced himself as the *directeur* of a celebrated foreign circus, at present located in London. The interview between the parties was short, but decisive, and terminated in the engagement of Lethbridge and the boys by the Frenchman at a liberal weekly salary, the engagement to hold good for three years certain. The directeur hastened back to town to set the printer and the bill-sticker at work *instantly*; and in a day or two London was placarded with gigantic posters, representing a snow-scene, wherein, arrayed in gorgeous Roman costume, the mountebank appeared, the extreme point of one foot resting on a diminutive glass globe, the other gracefully extended in the air. On his forehead he supported, pyramid-wise, his two boys—dressed in Turkish flies and Greek caps—Midgkins, who formed the apex, waving in each hand a small flag, emblazoned with the arms of France. To complete the picture, father's hands were industriously employed in tossing up and catching at least a dozen oranges, and as many formidable-looking two-edged knives—and all this during a heavy fall of snow; not very natural, but highly effective.

Four years have passed away since the mountebank and his family, with tears of gratitude, bade adieu to their generous Eglinthorpe friends. Since then, they have travelled professionally, even as far as Constantinople. Last year, having completed the term of their engagement with *Monsieur le Directeur*, they returned to their native country, greatly improved in appearance, manners, and knowledge. All the family speak French and German fluently; and the boys are considered by the best judges to be first-rate acrobats, horse-riders, and rope-dancers; consequently,



their services are greatly sought after. They can now command excellent salaries, and, in short, are looked upon in their profession as holding rank A1.

## THE FAUSSETT COLLECTION.

### CONCLUDING ARTICLE.

IN thus resuming our article upon the fine Anglo-Saxon antiquities possessed by Mr Mayer of Liverpool, we must not omit to notice one or two other points in relation to the excavations at Gilton, before we proceed to some description of Mr Faussett's interesting labours at Kingston Down and Bishopsbourne.

His Gilton researches brought to light a set of scales and weights; the former small, and not unlike such as are used by goldsmiths at the present day. Mr Roach Smith considers that they were used for weighing the numerous varieties of foreign coin, both gold and silver, which must necessarily have been current in Britain in the early Anglo-Saxon times. The weights were eighteen in number, of copper, and of different sizes. A few of these had been originally Roman coins, and had been clipped, or ground, to adjust them to variations of weight; others had been expressly made for their intended use. In the same grave with these relics, the usual weapons of war were found; thus suggesting, as Mr Roach Smith well observes, that the occupant had laid by the implements of his early vocation to follow a more peaceful and humanising profession. Another object found in one of the graves consisted of part of a small pail or bucket. Mr Faussett conjectured that it had originally formed portions of a shield; but the discovery of a large number of much more perfect specimens since his time, in various parts of England and on the continent as well, has cleared up the point completely. They are always found in the graves of men. The staves, generally speaking, are formed of ash—the favourite wood of the Anglo-Saxons; and the hoops, handles, and other ornamental portions, are of brass or bronze, and in extremely good taste. A beautiful specimen is given in the plates of Mr Akerman's valuable work, *Remains of Pagan Saxondom*; and both he and Mr Wright consider that they were used for bringing ale or mead into the hall—a conjecture strengthened by a passage in the poem of *Beowulf*, and by another in the Anglo-Saxon translation of the book of Judges. As the reader may perhaps be aware, the Anglo-Saxon culture of the cereals for brewing purposes was very large—so generally was beer drunk, that even the serfs were allowed a daily measure; and where rents and dues were paid in kind, as was of course largely the case in all early historic periods, a portion—as the chartularies still extant shew us—consisted of winter-brewed ale under various names. The honey of both wild and domesticated bees was also carefully gathered for brewing mead.

In no less than eight graves, Mr Faussett found, in a perfect or broken state, specimens of glass urns or vessels. They had been placed at the foot of the corpse or coffin, and were for the major part marked by the spiral thread or line, which is so distinguishing an ornament of Anglo-Saxon glass. For a long time, it was considered in this country that glass-making was an art unknown both to Romans and Saxons; but the disinterment of Pompeii, and the excavation of Roman sites in Britain, have quite set the matter at rest so far as regards the Romans; whilst the opening of so many Saxon graves of recent years has fully proved that the Saxons—probably deriving, in this country at least, much of their knowledge from the Romans—were skilful manipulators, and this with a distinctive style of their own. Led by a

passage in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, who therein relates that Benedict, bishop of Wearmouth, had to procure men from France to glaze the windows of his church and monastery, English historians, till quite a recent date, repeated the worthless fiction, that the manufacture of glass was unknown to the Anglo-Saxons. Even Sharon Turner gives this fable in his own way, forgetting that Bede's disciple, as well as Bede himself, dwelt on a remote north-eastern shore of England, from whence it was much easier to send by ship in search of workmen to France, than to cross miles of trackless morass and dense forests to the cities of Southern Britain. Even centuries after, during the middle ages, the counties of Lincoln and Cambridgeshire were indebted to their sea-board position for the magnificence of the brasses and stained-glass which still distinguish their churches, and which were procured from the Low Countries.

It is probable that some, at least, of the glass vessels found at Gilton and elsewhere by Mr Faussett, were connected with the heathen rites and superstitions which so long survived the introduction of Christianity; but many were certainly drinking-cups, by the rounded or tapering bottom, which fits them for the hand, but unfits them for standing upright. This was a favourite shape for the Anglo-Saxon drinking-cup, as we see by the illuminations in the missals, gospels, and manuscripts which have come down to our time; and that these existed in abundance, we may judge by the number found in all tumular excavations of the Anglo-Saxon period. Towards the close of the last century, as many as thirty were found at one time at Wodensborough in Kent; but so little value was set upon them, that they were used commonly in the kitchen of the farm upon which they were found. Only one of them, therefore, has reached our time. There was another form of drinking-cup, quite peculiar to the Saxon fabricators of glass—that in which they are adorned with two rows of hollow protuberances or claws, for the purpose of handles perhaps. They are more curious than elegant; but the type was spread over a wide area, as examples have been found both in France and Germany, so it is probable that glass-making was carried on, contemporaneously, in the three countries. One great mistake was made by Mr Faussett and other antiquaries of his period: they considered that the iridescent and hazy look which is the peculiar characteristic of so much ancient glass, was due to an artificial coating of what they called, in somewhat alchemist style, electrum and armatura; whereas this variation of colour proceeded simply from partial decomposition, hastened or retarded by the nature of the soil in which the glass had been deposited. In the case of Saxon glass, this change of colour is more marked than in that of Roman glass, as both it and the Saxon pottery were in all respects decidedly inferior.

Kingston Down, the next scene of Mr Faussett's excavations, forms part of a lovely tract of country called Barham Downs, a ridge of chalky upland lying about five miles south of Canterbury. The tumuli crowned a hill above the little village of Kingston, which, with its pleasant farms and fields, its rivulet or bourn, its lanes, its rich woodlands, and what has been spared from the plough of the tracts of high-lying chalk, is a place, even now, that one would like to choose for a long summer's holiday. Here, in the years 1767-71-72-73, Mr Faussett excavated no less than 308 graves; and the result was, in some few cases, remarkable. From what we may gather, it appears to have been the cemetery of a more rural population than that of Gilton; as compared with the number of graves, fewer warlike weapons were found. Fewer bodies had been encoffined—a circumstance which in itself points to a period either anterior to the introduction of Christianity, or in

the infancy of its promulgation; and the majority of burials seem to have been those of women and young persons—a fact perhaps explained by the withdrawal of the adult male population for the exigencies of war. A good many graves contained little more than bones, with perhaps a rusty knife, a few beads, or other appendages of equally homely character. But, generally speaking, the Saxon cemeteries were used by an affluent people, according to what was then considered as wealth. The question, then, is, what became of the miserably poor—the vast mass of those who were serfs either through the fortunes of war, necessity, crime, or birth? Mr Akerman very justly observes, that even allowing for the obvious destruction of many Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, and of others, the barrows of which, long swept away by spade or plough, may still lie undiscovered beneath arable and pasture lands, there certainly exists no proportion between the places of burial and the known amount of population. The cemeteries received the bodies of those who were in any degree removed from indigence; but we may be certain that for a long period the great mass of the unfree were thrust beneath the sod of the next pasture, or amid the leaves and brushwood of the adjacent forest. With the formation of churchyards in the eighth century, and from the care which the clergy took, for their own sakes, to convince the population of all classes that salvation was to be insured by burial in consecrated ground, a better state of things slowly grew; and however much the propinquity of such receptacles to houses is to be deplored early in the middle ages, and giving rise to pestilential disease, there can be little doubt that the gathering together for ages of the dust of both poor and rich had a civilising and beneficial effect.

Mr Faussett's Kingston excavations had already been productive of some beautiful objects, when, upon the 5th of August 1771, his labours were rewarded by the discovery of the magnificent fibula already spoken of. The grave in which it was found was the 205th of these Kingston excavations, and it was of unusual size and depth. It was that of a female, the wife, probably, of some wealthy thane, whose child seems to have been previously interred therein. The coffin had been of great thickness, and secured at the corners with large clasps and riveted pieces of iron. The skeleton was small, the bones much decayed, and the skull indifferently developed. The fibula was found near the right shoulder. It is formed entirely of gold, is three and a half inches in diameter, and weighs between six and seven ounces. The stones with which it is set are garnet and turquoise—the white substance with which these are varied being apparently mother-of-pearl—and the effect of the garnets is heightened by layers of gold-foil. The reverse of the fibula is also richly decorated; and its safety is provided for by a loop by which it could be sewn to the dress. No more written description can give an adequate idea of this costly relic of the Anglo-Saxon age; and as there is nothing Roman about it, beyond perhaps the effect of indirect influence, so far as manipulation went, it gives us perfectly new ideas as to the original taste of the Saxons in certain directions, and assures us that their fame as smiths in iron and the more costly metals was well deserved. Mr Roach Smith is decidedly of opinion that this and other fibulae of a like character, as well as other Anglo-Saxon ornaments, were of home-manufacture, as none of the Frankish or German remains shew a like excellence; and he further adds, that these richly ornamented circular fibulae seem peculiar to Kent. They are sparingly and exceptionally found beyond the district occupied by the earlier Saxon settlers.

In a previous grave, a fibula of silver set with ivory and garnets, and a pendent ornament of gold enriched

with the like stones, were found; while a subsequent excavation brought to light another beautiful fibula, smaller, but set somewhat in the same manner. The grave we have first referred to in these Kingston excavations, contained, beside its master-piece of Saxon art, a golden amulet for the neck; and amid the fragments of what had once been a box, were two silver fibulae. There were also the rusty remains of a châtelaine, an urn of coarse red earth, two brass or bronze pans, a trivet, and a very beautiful urn of green glass. The coffin seems to have been made purposely large to receive many of these things, and altogether it was one of the richest graves opened by Mr Faussett. It is mentioned by his descendants, that the famous fibula was discovered by his son as he superintended the opening of this particular barrow on Kingston Down. On finding it, he carried it with great glee to his father, who was in his carriage hard by, suffering under an attack of his old enemy the gout. Mr Faussett drove off with it, and next day a report was spread that the carriage had been so full of gold that the wheels would scarcely turn! It is added, that in consequence of this, the lord of the manor would permit no further excavations on the downs; but this must be incorrect, as we find Mr Faussett's labours on this site were carried on through two subsequent years. Mr Mayer, like a genuine successor of Bryan Faussett, shews the Kingston fibula with great unction to his guests, to whom we have reason to say he is the most generous and courteous of hosts. A day or two previous to the delightful evening we had the pleasure of spending amid his treasures of so many kinds, Dr Waagen had travelled purposely from London to Liverpool to see these Anglo-Saxon remains; and many others distinguished by rank, or, what is higher still, by capacity and education, go thither on the same errand. In time, the generalisers of history will go also, to find it one of many garners for the materials of their great work.

Articles of gold were found in no less than six of these Kingston graves; and the evidence which always exists that treasure-seekers have been at work before, proves how great was the amount of the precious metals originally interred, and how intense the superstition which led to such a perversion of common sense. Several causes combined to render the burial of treasure common in early and heathen periods. It was considered a point of honour for an individual to carry as much wealth with him from this world to the next as possible, and it was a recognised duty of the *comites* and household of the chief to sacrifice at his funeral whatever chattels they might have gained in his service. Thus we learn from *Beowulf* that when a chief was buried—

They put into the mound  
rings and bright gems,  
the gains of noble men:  
gold in the dust,  
where it doth remain  
useless to men,  
even as before it was.

When we consider the truly extraordinary number of heathen burial-places which are mentioned in the boundaries of Saxon charters, we cannot doubt that large quantities of the precious metals were committed to the earth. Causes of a more practical nature also wrought their effects: one was the insecurity of the times; another, the want of all kinds of investment for property. The Britons, previous to the Saxons, were great treasure-hoarders; for William of Malmesbury mentions the hoards which were discovered in his day; and the same was a general habit with the continental as well as Irish and Scotch Celts. The charming works of the French antiquarian

savans, and the provincial museums, especially those of the north and north-west departments, give a curious insight into this habit of heathenism; and in so recent a book as Mr Weld's *Vacation in Brittany*—a most delightful little volume—we find that weighty collars, bracelets, and other articles in gold, are still occasionally found in tumular excavations, especially in the wild region covered by the stones of Carnac, and swept by the surges of the Atlantic. In Ireland, accident, as well as research, has brought to light from time to time extraordinary treasures in wrought gold, as the single collection of the late Mr Croker would have shewn; and Scotland, with so much native gold as she originally possessed, fabricated largely for her own races, as well, doubtless, as spared much to distant heathenisms. Of the amount of gold in a rudely wrought state found in this latter country, some idea may be gathered from one of the most readable books we know of in the whole range of antiquarian literature, Wilson's *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, though we decidedly doubt the logic of its subdivisions into material periods.

This similar habit of the Saxons to bury treasure with their dead tended to increase the quantity of gold and silver drawn from general use. At length some conviction of the mischief done to society by this habit led to its repression, and also to severe laws against the concealment of treasure-trove. But two powerful circumstances must have modified for a considerable period this growth of common sense: these were the barbarous love of ornament, and the ease with which articles like coins, gems, and rings could be concealed and carried from place to place; and so conquerors, as well as the conquered, were willing to realise their gains in a fashion thus portable. The dignity of each petty king—and for a considerable period each division of Saxon England seems to have had several—was marked by a circlet of gold worn round the head, that of the ealdorman or duke by a like sign; and the free women wore gold, silver, and jewelled pins in the long hair which was the sign of their freedom. After the promulgation of Christianity, the gifts of the laity to the clergy became enormous; and, not confined alone to land and serfs, included jewels, cups, rings, crosses, caskets, and money. Some of the clergy themselves were skilful fabricators of the precious metals, for they were admonished to learn and practise handicrafts; and it is not unlikely, tracing as we do some likeness between the ornamentation of the more beautiful Saxon missals and that of the later fibulae and buckles, that the monks were the fabricators of the richer portion of the jewellery we have record of, though that gathered from the Saxon barrows belongs, with but few exceptions, to the heathen period. One monk was made an abbot on account of his skill in gold-work. The heriots belonging to the king or chiefs comprised not only arms and horses, but gold and silver cups and rings of price. The Saxon wills bequeath a large amount of jewellery. We read of a golden fly beautifully adorned with gems, of gold vermiculated bracelets, golden head-beads and necklaces. The men wore jewelled ornaments even more profusely than the women. Besides armlets and rings, gold and silver were also applied to their sword-hilts, their saddles and banners. The wills also make continual mention of silver cups, gold dishes, and basins. A king in 833 bequeathed his gilt cup, engraved on the outside with vine-dressers, probably, from the design, a relic of the Roman period; and the magnificent presents in gold and silver which the father of King Alfred took with him in his embassy to Rome must have been of enormous value. One Ethelwold, in Edgar's reign, is said to have made a silver table worth £300 in the money of the period.

The question naturally arises, whence did this

enormous amount of the precious metals come? Silver was in a great measure an imported commodity, but gold was the earliest metal known, and was, there can be little doubt, found in this country in great abundance in the early historic ages, though its prolific sources had been worked out by races prior to the advent of the Romans. The hope, however, of obtaining the precious metals was one, among other causes, which led them to the invasion of this country, and they seem to have subsequently worked gold in four localities. 'We have no evidence as to gold-working in the Anglo-Saxon times,' says Mr Calvert, in his clever book, *The Gold Rocks of Britain*; 'still it is probable that it was yet found in small quantities. It could be obtained from the tin streams, and occasionally in nuggets and scales from the rivers of Wales and North Britain.' Analysis shews that the gold found in tumular excavations, is metal obtained from river-washings. The articles are always of very pure gold, and, being softer, could be the more readily worked; for alloys, that might add to the weight or strength of the metal, are the invention of a later day; hence the avidity with which tumular gold has always been sought. The Saxon or Danish barrow was a treasure-house to our medieval kings; and the smelting-pots of far later days have had things consigned to them, whose value, in a historical point of view, was incalculable.

Amongst the greatest rarities of the Kingston excavations, were five large ivory combs: one had been mended, and two were in almost a perfect state, and much like those which are found amongst Roman remains. In one woman's grave were found two ivory spindles; in another, was a Roman *patena* or dish of fine coralline earth. Much of this beautiful pottery seems to have been preserved by the Saxons; and some has descended to our own time. Mr Roach Smith mentions in his notes, that 'it is not an uncommon incident to find a specimen at the present day here and there in cottages and country-houses in Kent.'

The sherds of bone-urns, or ossuaries, were found in considerable numbers in both the Gilton and Kingston excavations. Many of such fragments were placed one within the other—the upper in the lower—and this with a regularity and care which could not have been the result of accident. They were usually of coarse black earth, varying in size; and their existence shews clearly the interesting fact, that these Saxon cemeteries had been in previous use during the Roman as well as the Romano-British period, and while burning the corpse and garnering its ashes was the ordinary custom. Cremation, or burning, was also a usage of the Teutonic races so long as paganism existed among them; and some curious facts connected with the urns dug up in Norfolk in the reign of Charles II., and which were the subject of Sir Thomas Browne's curious tract *Hydriotaphia*, shew clearly that a body of Saxons were located in that part of Britain as early as the close of the third century. In fact, the Saxons drove, as far as possession went, a wedge into this country, whenever and however they could; and the whole south and south-eastern shore—from what is now Portsmouth to Wells in Norfolk, was, as Mr Kemble shews, more or less colonised by the Saxon race from a very early period. Thus eating their way, as it were, into the heart of a country, whose pastures, forests, and herds were the objects of their longing desire, each tribe, even during the shadows of its pagan state, seems to have used its own peculiar customs, with respect to the dead—as, 'in the cemeteries of Kent and Sussex,' observes Mr Akerman, 'inhumation appears to have been the almost exclusive practice. In Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, and Gloucestershire, the practice of inhumation and cremation was contemporaneous; whilst in some



districts of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Derbyshire, cremation appears to have been the sole observance.'

None of the wide-mouthed or other urns found by Mr Faussett seem to have been applied to the purposes of cremation, but may have been placed in the graves for other uses, or as relics. The Saxon pottery, distinctly as such, is but a degraded copy of the Roman. 'It wants,' remarks Mr Roach Smith, 'the graceful form of its Roman prototypes; the ornamentation is less tasteful, and its material is very inferior.' Yet it is all marked by the influence of local fashion, for the pottery of Kent differs essentially from that of other counties, and theirs, again, one from each other; so that, in fact, if the Saxons were copyists, they manifested at least the germs of originality. This is a curious fact, and gives a clue to some points of considerable value.

As far as regarded ethnological observations, Mr Faussett did little with his discoveries. He makes some occasional remarks as to the frontal suture in a few of the skulls, as well as to cranial deformity; but he might have elicited much more had the knowledge of his time been favourable thereto; for, considering the very lengthened period which had elapsed since burial, the bones in the Kingston graves, more especially, were in a well-preserved condition. In the hands of one like the illustrious American Morton, the revelations of so many graves as those recorded in the *Inventorium Sepulchrale*, would have served for inductions of the highest value; for, after all, the study of man himself must range higher than man's works, in whatever point of view they be considered.

Excavations upon Sibertswood Down—a high and somewhat solitary district—occupied Mr Faussett at different periods through 1772-3, but the general results are so much like those already described, as to make remark unnecessary. The only objects of novelty were two wooden bowls or drinking-cups of wood, rimmed and strengthened with brass, and one curiously mended. In another grave were some pendent ornaments of great beauty for the neck; and in a third was found a small bronze box, in which were silken strings, wool, and hair, in a state of excellent preservation. About two years previous to Mr Faussett's earliest excavations on this down, some men while ploughing had brought to light various articles of Roman pottery of great beauty; but they had wantonly destroyed them before their master could arrive. This has been only too often the fate of similar treasures.

In the latter year, namely, 1773, Mr Faussett opened some tumuli at a place called Beakesbourne; but the results were not of much account beyond that of the discovery that its site had been used from a Celtic period as a place of interment. His next and final researches were made at Chatham in the same year. The barrows opened proved it to have been a great Saxon burial-place; but at the present date, even these hillocks have disappeared, through the whole down having been brought into cultivation. The discoveries made were not remarkable, though including a Roman stylus or pen, with some remnants of its leather case, and a key of the same period, looking curiously like those of the Chubb locks in present use.

Mr Faussett's explorations at Crundale had, as already mentioned, preceded the others, having taken place in 1757 and 1759. The Earl of Winchelsea, conjointly with the then rector of the parish, had dug there in 1703 and 1713, and brought to light some Roman pottery. An account of this in a local history induced Mr Faussett to turn discoverer. His first diggings were most prolific, his subsequent ones less so. The results consisted chiefly of Roman pottery; though most of it perished during excavation, or fell in pieces almost as soon as found. That which had

been most covered by the chalk was best preserved. What was found included bone-urns, urns of other kinds, pateræ, or flat dishes, bottle-like vessels, and some few things in glass. A portion of the pottery was true Samian; the rest probably of local manufacture. Towards the close of the excavations, remains were brought to light which proved that the later interments had been Saxon.

We have thus faithfully given, so far as mere summary can, some account of the celebrated Faussett Collection, so well known to the *literati* of both this country and the continent. We have necessarily passed over many objects of great interest; but sufficient has been referred to for the reader to perceive that much of Saxon history, Saxon social life, and Saxon usages, is very different in reality from what romances and common-place histories set down. Liverpool will soon possess a museum worthy of this and similar collections; but whether now or in time to come, these Saxon antiquities will not be justly viewed without due remembrance of the enthusiasm and diligence of Bryan Faussett, and the liberality and enlightened patriotism of Joseph Mayer.

#### • THE OLD VILLAGE AND ITS INMATES.

IN spite of railways, electric telegraphs, and all the other annihilators of peace, quietness, and silvan solitude, there are some quaint rural districts in Old England still—some old villages where everybody does not know, day by day, what all the world is doing; where the villagers are content to dwell from youth to age amid their own people; as primitive as ignorant, as old-fashioned as if the great clock of time had stood still for them since the penultimate peace.

Such is the village of Thyndon. Left between two great lines of railway, five miles from a post-town, with only one 'great house' in its vicinity, and scarcely any country neighbourhood, it is the Thyndon of a century ago, unchanged, and with comparatively little chance of changing.

Of course, being a place in which modern bricks, stones, and mortar are almost unknown, it has a most magnificent church, the delight and pride of the village, as well as the admiration of every architecturally disposed visitor. Such aisles, such a chancel, such a screen! You would go far to find any like them. The centre aisle is so wide, that three can walk abreast up it, although the school children sit in double rows on each side, between the pew-doors. The monuments are old and singular; the wood-carved pulpit and screen, gems of art; and the windows worthy of recalling Milton's delicious lines to memory by the 'dim religious light' which streams in rosy or purple glory through their tinted panes. The belfry, too, is worthy of great admiration, and has a sad story attached to it—too horrible indeed to be given here. Poor Joe Milward! he was as good a husband and father as the village ever boasted, and well beloved besides as a kind neighbour and 'good fellow.' The catastrophe by which he lost his life made people wish that the vacant little cottage which stood close beside the churchyard might be given to widows instead of to the eldest unmarried woman of the village; but the rector could not alter the will of the founder. It must be a more modern charity that would come to the aid of the widow of Joe Milward; and she was taken care of and provided for, both she and her six little ones, though not in that way.

The houses near this glorious church deserve our first attention. They are as ancient as the holy pile itself, and of the most picturesque description. On each side of the entrance stand two small detached cottages, destined—as we have hinted above—the one for the eldest spinster, the other for the eldest bachelor

of the parish, provided they were of respectable character. A small meadow is attached to each tiny dwelling, which itself looks like a bee-hive, buried amidst green leaves and flowering shrubs. On one side of the church stands the parsonage, a long rambling dwelling with high gable-ends, tall chimneys, and a clock-tower; it also is imbosomed in trees, and covered with ivy. Its quaint old garden opens into the churchyard, and is rich in old-fashioned roses (not standards), lilies of the valley, and all the fair blossoms, now half-forgotten, which perfume, as it were, the poetry of the *Winter's Tale* and *Lycidas*.

Here dwells the good old rector, a widower with one unmarried daughter. The other lives at Merton's End—the 'Home of the Old Ladies' as it is called even now—as a happy and adored wife. But we have something to tell of that fair dame before we quit the time-honoured rectory for her present dwelling, which is also the squire's—a deed so courageous that the village has been two or three degrees prouder of itself ever since it happened.

The squire had fallen in love with the fair Adelaide, and the wedding-day was to be on the morrow of that on which our adventure happened. Grand preparations were made for the wedding; and the rector's fine old plate, and the costly gifts of the bride, were discussed with pride and pleasure at the Hare and Hounds, in the presence of some strangers who had come down to a prize-fight which had taken place in the neighbourhood.

That night, Adelaide, who occupied a separate room from her sister, sat up late—long after all the household had retired to rest. She had had a long interview with her father, and had been reading a chapter to which he had directed her attention, and since, had packed up her jewels, &c. She was consequently still dressed when the church-clock tolled midnight. As it ceased, she fancied she heard a low noise like that of a file; she listened, but could distinguish nothing clearly. It might have been made by some of the servants still about, or perhaps it was only the creaking of the old trees. She heard nothing but the sighing of the winter wind for many minutes afterwards. Housebreakers were mere myths in primitive Thyndon, and the bride-elect, without a thought of fear, resumed her occupation. She was gazing on a glittering set of diamonds, destined to be worn at the wedding, when her bedroom door softly opened. She turned, looked up, and beheld a man with a black mask, holding a pistol in his hand, standing before her.

She did not scream, for her first thought was for her father, who slept in the next room, and to whom any sudden alarm might be death, for he was old, feeble, and suffering from heart-complaint. She confronted the robber boldly, and addressed him in a whisper: 'You are come,' she said, 'to rob us. Spare your soul the awful guilt of murder. My father sleeps next to my room, and to be startled from his sleep would kill him. Make no noise, I beg of you.'

The fellow was astonished and cowed. 'We won't make no noise,' he replied sullenly, 'if you give us everything quietly.'

Adelaide drew back, and let him take her jewels—not without a pang, for they were precious love-gifts, remarking at the same time that two more masked ruffians stood at the half-opened door. As he took the jewel-case and watch from the table, and demanded her purse, she asked him if he intended to go into her father's room. She received a surly affirmative: 'he wasn't going to run a risk, and leave half the tin behind!' She proposed instantly that she should go herself, saying: 'I will bring you whatever you wish, and you may guard me thither, and kill me if I play false to you.' The fellow consulted his comrades, and after a short parley, they agreed to the proposal; and with a pistol pointed at her head, the dauntless girl

crossed the passage, and entered the old rector's room. Very gently she stole across the chamber, and removing his purse, watch, keys, and desk, gave them up to the robbers, who stood at the door. The old man slept peacefully and calmly, thus guarded by his child, who softly shut the door, and demanded if the robbers were yet satisfied.

The leader replied, that they should be when they had got the show of plate spread out below, but that they couldn't let her out of sight, and that she must go with them. In compliance with this mandate, she followed them down stairs to the dining-room, where a splendid wedding-breakfast had been laid, to save trouble and hurry on the morrow. To her surprise, the fellows—eight in number when assembled—seated themselves, and prepared to make a good meal. They ordered her to get them out wine, and to cut her own wedding-cake for them; and then seated at the head of the table, she was compelled to preside at this extraordinary revel.

They ate, drank, laughed, and joked; and Adelaide, quick of eye and ear, had thus time to study, in her quiet way, the figures and voices of the whole set.

When the repast was ended, and the plate transferred to a sack, they prepared to depart, whispering together, and glancing at the young lady. For the first time, Adelaide's courage gave way, and she trembled; but it was not a consultation against her, as it proved. The leader, approaching her, told her that they did not wish to harm her—that she was 'a jolly wench, reg'lar game,' and they wouldn't hurt her, but that she must swear not to give an alarm till nine or ten the next day, when they should be off all safe. To this she was of course obliged to assent, and then they all insisted on shaking hands with her. She noticed during this parting ceremony, that one of the ruffians had only three fingers on the left hand.

Alone in the despoiled room, Adelaide, faint and exhausted, awaited the first gleam of daylight; then, as the robbers did not return, she stole up to her room, undressed, and fell into a disturbed slumber. The consternation of the family the next morning may be imagined; and Adelaide's story was still more astounding than the fact of the robbery itself. Police were sent for from London, and they, guided by Adelaide's lucid description of her midnight guests, actually succeeded in capturing every one of the gang, whom the young lady had no difficulty in identifying and swearing to—the 'three-fingered Jack' being the guiding clue to the discovery. The stolen property was nearly all recovered, and the old rector always declared—and with truth—that he owed his life to the self-possession and judgment of his eldest daughter.

The only ill effect of the great trial to her nerves, was a disposition, on the part of the young heroine, to listen for midnight sounds, and start uneasily from troubled dreams; but time and change of residence soon effected its cure.

The house to which this strangely preceded marriage led Adelaide, was a fine old mansion, dating its erection from the very days of Elizabeth. A straight drive through two gates, such as is peculiar to the entrance of old French châteaux, leads up to the entrance, on each side of which stand two very old tulip-trees, of unusual size and beauty. There is something very picturesque in the quaint gables, and the bell-tower in the centre between them; and against the side of the house is a wall-dial, the only one of its kind to be seen, perhaps, now in England. Here, on the weather-stained bricks, it has counted the hours of human life for three hundred years.

The last occupants were three aged ladies, whose long residence and venerable appearance gave a new name to Merton's End, which, from their time, has been called by the villagers the Home of the Old Ladies. The eldest of the three was but twenty years

old when she came to live there; she was ninety-five the very day the old wall-dial pointed to her last hour. So long a continuance in so quiet a place might seem to imply a life of unbroken tranquillity, and doubtless the great age to which they attained might have proceeded from the peaceful lapse of time; and yet *they*, too, had a history. There was a tinge of romance about their youth which had coloured their long slow life.

When, in the bloom of early years, they had come to dwell at Merton's End, it had been judged proper—the eldest being only twenty—to place them under the care of a widowed lady, distantly related to their family. Now, it so chanced that this gentlewoman had been educated in Paris, and had there imbibed much of the literary tastes and affectation of philosophy which were the fashion of the day. She delighted in believing herself an English Du Deffand, far superior to the prejudices of her time and country; and read and discussed with great vivacity those gay French writers who, by their wit and sentimentalities, divorced from common sense, were sowing the dragon's teeth of the Reign of Terror. This lady had a nephew—English by birth, but brought up in France—a man about thirty, who held an office in the French court, and was as really learned and witty as his aunt dreamed of being. This gentleman was, soon after their establishment at Merton's End, invited to visit his relative.

One can fancy how gay the old house was in those days—the three fair sisters brightening it with smiles, and glad voices, and merry household ways—and how the neighbouring young squires would ride slowly by, on summer eventides, to catch a glimpse of the young ladies of the manor, as they sat talking beneath the old tulip-trees. It was thought they would soon wed, for they were all well grown and fair, and co-heiresses; and in those days, celibacy was less common than now. There was the old maid of Thyndon itself, and in families, rarely more than one remained unmarried. It was because it was rare, perhaps, that the single state was more marked then than at present; just as people then talked of the beauty of a county or of a ball—probably some damsel who had escaped small-pox—whereas now so many stars twinkle, that selection can scarcely be made, thanks to vaccination and refined education.

But the suitors who already aspired to the favour of the sisters, had small chance of success when the expected guest arrived. Truly, that same Walter Selby was a contrast to the somewhat clownish Nimrods of the vicinity. The man of dogs and horses stood no chance beside the finished French courtier, who preferred ladies' society to the hunt, drank tea with them out of diminutive cups and saucers, understood and appreciated a graceful fashion, and told them fascinating stories of the brilliant world of Paris, with its gaiety, its *bons-mots*, its mesmerism, its mixture of fantastic superstition and bold infidelity: how Marie Antoinette, choosing to wear shoes of a mixed green called *l'uni-vert*, which did not take the fancy of her court, appealed to the judgment of a reverend abbé, supposed to be the very 'mask of fashion'; and how the gallant priest replied by a punning compliment: 'Madame, l'univers [*l'uni-vert*] sied bien à vos pieds.' Or he told of the wonderful Count of St Germain, who contrived to persuade the Parisians of his immortality on earth, till he died—he was not dead then—and guest and damsels gravely discussed the possibility of prolonging even to infinitude that life, their own portion of which was destined to drag on till its light and freshness had long perished. What, after such an abbé and such a magician, was the quiet, broad-brimmed young parson of the village, who coloured and stammered at the slightest approach to a compliment; and the country doctor, whose patients died

without at all surprising him. And after this modern Othello, how could they listen to the untravelled youth around them?

The stranger gave a new charm to Merton's End, and, alas! threw an unhappy glamour over its fair inmates individually. Skilled in coquetry, he managed to persuade each that she was the object of his especial preference, the spell which bound him for so long to Merton's End. He had held the hand of one, as if involuntarily, and resigned it with a sigh; another had found him continually beside her in her walks: all three could recall tender glances and soft tones, gentle words, and those indefinable nothings that are the silent language of undeclared affection. Yet not one could be sufficiently certain of his intentions to confide in her sisters, and thus rend the veil of deception. He deceived all three at the same moment—an easy feat, when those betrayed are simple-minded and honest, and the betrayer an experienced swindler of affection.

At length his visit ended, with the promise of a speedy return; and a meaning in each parting clasp of their hands, and farewell in their ear; and for years that return was expected with something of the feeling, as time sped on, of Mariana in the moated grange. How often did the sisters gaze mournfully across the wide heath from the drawing-room windows, in hope of *his* coming whom they might see no more! It was this unspoken hope, this secret affection, that caused suitor after suitor to be rejected, till youth glided by, and lovers ceased to woo. The old aunt died; the French Revolution had long since shaken Europe—they believed it had somehow occasioned Walter's absence—and the sisters settled down into grave middle-aged ladies.

The eldest, who had been most infected by her aunt's tastes, preserved all her life a withered rose Walter Selby had given her, in a painted tiffany-case, and wrote poetry upon disappointed affection; some of which, very yellow, very oddly spelt, and a little lame in the feet, Adelaide has found since she took possession of the old lady's boudoir, or, as *she* would have called it, 'her closet.'

The others took to lapdogs and parrots; and one, the youngest, was the Lady Bountiful of the village. All did good in their several ways, and, however blighted and saddened, were not embittered by the disappointment. When the tulip-trees, beneath which they had sat in blooming girlhood, were in fuller beauty than ever, and their own loveliness had become a myth, Walter Selby came to Merton's End once more.

The letter announcing his approaching visit excited quite a sensation in the minds of the quiet ladies. Time flew back, as it were, or at least parted with a quiver of his wings the mist spreading over the past; and the courtier of other days returned so vividly to their mental vision, that it was with a feeling of surprise and unconscious disappointment they beheld a thin, gray-headed old gentleman—an aged *petit maître*—instead of the graceful personage they had known of yore. Walter was as bland, as courteous, as would-be-fascinating as ever. The flirt was the flirt still, even in undignified old age; but the days of working mischief were gone by. The ladies saw him depart, after a brief visit, with friendly feelings, but no wish for his return.

Of the sorrow he had once caused—of the shadow and the solitariness he had brought on their lives, they now retained little perception. They had, by their cheerful habits of content, grown like the wall-dial, that only counts the sunny hours; the shadows glided unnumbered by them.

In due time, the beautiful church imbosomed them; and the dial now tells hours of happiness for a young distant kinsman and his bride, the 'Adelaide' of the



rectory; and probably Merton's End will regain its real name once more.

The village is not without a haunted house, of course; but in this case there is a marked singularity in the site of the goblin's freaks: it is the school which is haunted! Nobody knows why, or by whom. Luckily, ghosts shun daylight; and the dame who lives above the school-room has, as she phrases it, 'got used to its ways,' so that many little ones still are taught there, and things go on much as if the ghost were quite an ordinary inhabitant of Thyndon—a harmless eccentricity, doing no injury to any one.

Many an ivy-covered cottage, dotted about in green lanes, or clustering down the single grassy street, forms the remainder of the village; and the inmates of these dwellings are, as we have said, a primitive and old-fashioned people, though they are getting 'good teaching—which threatens to lay the ghost—at the village-school, and are quietly gliding into the superior knowledge and some of the arts of the present. To those who love that favourite of our youth, Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, and would fain see something of such as Auburn was in its bright days, we recommend a visit to Thyndon.

### MÆCENAS.

O MÆCENAS, thou progeny of Tuscan kings, in thy disconsolate wanderings by the gloomy Styx, thou canst surely hear the piteous wail of a thousand poor writers, who led lives of penury, and died miserably under the debasing system of patronage which thou didst inaugurate with such magnificence! Draw thy little hood tight about thy ears, to shut out the din of these half-starved students and Grub-street hacks! Fold that loose and slovenly robe, which thou didst whilom wear with an ostentatious simplicity, close around thee; and let thy slaves, thy musicians, thy buffoons, and thy beloved poets encircle thee, or perchance these clamorous shades will wreak their vengeance upon thy ghostly person!

Father of literary almsgiving, thou didst little think what a storm thou wert brewing in that lovely tower-crowned villa of thine on the Esquiline Hill, overlooking the smoke and opulence of flourishing Rome, when thou didst begin to pamper men of genius with the flesh of young mules, and wine from the Calenian press! Had you possessed one atom of foresight, you would have perceived the disastrous consequences of your generous hospitality, and would have avoided setting a fashion which would inevitably be burlesqued by your unworthy successors. Had you not crowned the smooth narrow forehead of Horace with roses, Scroggen might have found a more dignified head-dress than a stocking night-cap. Had you not poured out the choicest Cæcuban and Flernian at your banquets, some more kindly fluids than Calvert's butter and Parson's black champagne might have regaled the poets of later times. Had you not loaded Virgil with favours, we should not have heard of great authors being dunned for milk-scores. In a word, had you not elevated the men of letters of the Augustan age, their poor brethren of the last century might have been spared the degradation of petitioning your professed disciples for eleemosynary guineas. Truly, dear knight Mæcenas, you have much to answer for, but you were a right good fellow for all that; and were you still in the land of the living, we know a deserving though obscure literary gentleman who would be proud of your friendship, and who would be content to share even your sober cups of ignoble Sabine wine, and the quiet pleasures of some towerless Islingtonian villa.

Our thoughts have been sent wool-gathering on the Esquiline Hill, by a rare work, entitled *Athenæ Britannica, or a Critical History of the Oxford and*

*Cambridge Writers*, which was indited some hundred and forty years ago, by Myles Davies, a Welsh clergyman, who abandoned his Flintshire parsonage, and came to London intent upon making his fortune as a man of letters. Poor Davies! profound scholar, linguist, critic, and politician as he was, he left his simple home as ignorant of the world as one of the sheep of his native mountains. He had to learn wisdom from the harshest of all teachers—experience, and was not long in discovering that this populous London was a very Sahara for a poor scholar who was forced to become the hawker of his own books. These books are now very rare, and are known only to the curious; the British Museum copy now before us, though incomplete, is considered to be a great treasure. The six volumes comprise a history of pamphlets and pamphleteers, a large amount of political and religious lore, and some highly interesting fragments of personal narrative. We value this literary hotch-potch for the vivid picture it gives us of a mendicant author. 'The avarice of booksellers, and the stinginess of hard-hearted patrons,' he writes, 'had driven me into a cursed company of door-keeping herds, to meet the irrational brutality of those uneducated, mischievous animals called footmen, mumpers, apothecaries, attorneys, and such-like beasts of prey.' Samuel Johnson, in after-years, had to complain of the same grievance, so we must not consider Myles Davies's case a solitary one. In vain does the learned Welshman write ode after ode, the Mæcenases of 1716 are poetry-proof: 'These squeeze-farthing and hoard-penny ignoramuses,' as he politely designates them, either refuse to accept his books and odes, or receive them and omit to pay for them, retaining the poor scholar's property *gratis et ingratius*. His account of an interview with his grace of Dutch extraction, upon whose gracehip he had written an elaborate ode, is rather too coarse for modern ears. 'As I was jogging homeward,' he observes with pardonable acerbity, 'I found it true that a great many were called *thy* graces, not for any grace or favour they had truly deserved with God or man, but for the same reason of contraries that the Parce or Destinies were so called, that they spared none, or were not truly the *Parce*, *quia non parcebant*.' This play upon words reminds us of that pathetic kind of punning which Shakspeare sometimes introduces in his most serious scenes. Davies, though ordinarily a dull writer, grows eloquent under the pressure of his misfortunes. 'I can't choose,' he says, 'but make one observation or two more upon the various rencontres and adventures I met with, all in presenting my books to those I could anyways hear of that were likely to accept of them for their own information or improvement sake; or for the sake of the novelty of the present; or for the sake of helping a poor scholar; or for the sake of vanity and ostentation, which most people are subject to that have a mind to appear great, or more wealthy or learned than others. Accordingly, some parsons, as well as other persons, would call and holla to raise the whole house and posse of the domestics to raise a poor crown; at last all that flutter ends in sending Jack or Tom out to change a guinea, and then 'tis reckoned over half-a-dozen times before the fatal crown can be picked out, which must be taken as it is given, with all the parade of almsgiving, and so to be received with all the active and passive ceremonial of mendication and alms-receiving; as if the books, printing, and paper were worth nothing at all, and as if it were the greatest charity for them to touch them or let them be in the house. "For I shall never read them," says one of the five-shilling-piece-chaps. "I have no time to look in them," says another. "Tis so much money lying dead or quite lost," says a grave dean. "My eyes being so bad," says a bishop, "that I can scarce read at all." "What do you want with

me?" says another. "Sir, I presented you my *Athena Britannica*, being the last part published." "I don't want books," says he; "take them again; I don't understand what they mean." "The title is very plain," says I, "and they are writ mostly in English." "However," says he, "I'll give you a crown for both, though they'll signify nothing to me." "They stand me, sir, in more than that out of pocket, and 'tis for a bare subsistence I present or sell them; how shall I live?" "I care not a farthing for that," says he; "live or die, 'tis all one to me." "Curse my master!" says Jack; "'twas but last night he was commending your books and your learning up to the skies, and now he would not care if you were starving before his eyes; nay, he often makes game of your clothes, though he thinks you the greatest scholar in England. I could no more do so," continues Jack, "than hang myself. If I had but a shilling in the world, I would carry it five mile to a poor author whose books I esteemed or read." Well done, Jack! The true Mæcenas spirit speaks out from beneath thy plush waistcoat, and puts to shame such miserable pretenders as thy master!

Poor Myles Davies! we know not what became of him. We wish we could hear of him once more at the little parsonage of Trerabbat, but we fear his latter days were too sad to have been recorded.

Literature is in leading-strings no longer; the child has outgrown the go-cart of patronage, and walks alone. Authors have ceased crawling on all-fours, and walk erect before that greatest of all Mæcenas—the public. 'Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?' So wrote brave old Samuel Johnson to his courtly Mæcenas, in that celebrated letter which Carlyle terms 'that far-famed Blast of Doom, that proclaimed into the ear of Lord Chesterfield, and through him to the listening world, that patronage should be no more!'

#### A LEGEND OF SAINT BEES.

##### I.

HARD by the Abbey's hallowed walls—  
The fame of old Saint Bees—  
The mellowed sunshine flick'ring falls  
Beneath o'erarching trees,  
And glints upon the rose-clad bower  
Where Bega sits at noontide hour.

The falcon pluming on her sleeve  
Hath not her eyes' dark gleam;  
Yet softened now, as tints of eve,  
With holy love they beam:  
She thinks of him who yesternight  
Had knelt him there his faith to plight.

And well that flush of maiden pride  
Befits her forward dream;  
The noblest chief by Solway's side  
Is he, its golden theme!  
What foe can scathe, what danger daunt,  
Young Edgar, lord of Egnemont?

A league toward the mountain land  
The hunter tracks his way  
To where yon turrets frowning stand  
O'er his ancestral sway:  
Beyond the ken o' the warden tower  
Is stretched his heritage of power.

No daughter of the castle-halls  
From Calder to the Tyne,  
But would the race her name recalls  
Were blended with his line;  
But rank and dowry—all, are vain  
To break the spell on Edgar lain.

The spell of Beauty, in the light  
Of youth's empyrean glow,  
With tresses like the locks of Night  
About a brow of snow!  
Meet mansion for the queenly guest—  
The soul that reigns in Bega's breast.

And who is she?—The abbess' ward,  
A child of Erin's shore;  
From life's gay follies self-debarred  
And higher fain to soar,  
When mortal Love's immortal leaven  
Thus touched the heart half-wooded to Heaven!

##### II.

Is it that Heaven just vengeance takes  
To lose a bride so fair,  
So soon your dream of joy awakes,  
Ye fond-enamoured pair?  
Where sunshine lit the rose-clad bower  
Now shades of sorrow darkly lower.

War, war's dread tramp, on hill, in dale,  
Hath echoed back the call  
For Albion's sons, with sword and mail,  
To meet by Carlisle wall—  
Whereon the royal banners wave  
That lead to freedom, or the grave.

Fall many a chieftain's flashing crest  
Gleams o'er the long array,  
Awaiting there the stern behest  
Of Battle's fateful day;  
And statelier than his proudest peers  
Lord Edgar heads the Cumbrian spears.

Stray news of conflict wildly stir  
The lonely maiden's heart;  
But soon the tidings come to her  
To bid all hope depart:  
That from the flying Northmen's track  
The chief who led returned not back!

They tell how in the headlong charge  
That broke the Danish horse,  
'Twas he swept through the serried marge  
O'er steed and rider's corse;  
And with threescore true yeomen's swords  
Had chased till night the stricken hordes.

They tell, alas! how that grim night  
Closed round a 'wildered band,  
Where every blazing beacon-light  
Betrayed a foeman's hand;  
They tell, how 'mid the watchfires' glare,  
Death's grimmer night had gathered there!

Farewell, brave lord of Egnemont!  
No more, in field or bower,  
Thou'lt wave the sword in battle's front,  
Or share Love's charmed hour.  
Farewell! and sacred be the shade  
Of that lone tomb where thou art laid!

The grave of two unsullied hearts—  
The living, and the dead;  
For nought, O Bega, longer parts  
Thee from the life thou fled!  
The bridal veil that decks thee now  
Hath fluttered with a vestal's vow!

##### X.

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